

such organizations as the National Forum for Black Public Administrators, the Metropolitan YMCA, Hancock Savings and Loan and the California Chamber of Commerce.

Eze will be sorely missed, but his legacy remains. We join the port community and our constituents in extending to him sincere appreciation and wishing him and his family every success as he assumes the critical job of president of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CRIMINAL WELFARE PREVENTION ACT, PART II

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 1997

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, today Mr. CLEMENT, Mr. SHAW, Mr. BUNNING, Ms. DUNN, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. HAYWORTH, and Mr. BURTON join me in introducing legislation—the Criminal Welfare Prevention Act, Part II—which will prevent the needless waste of taxpayer dollars.

Last year, the 104th Congress took an important step forward in this regard by enacting legislation that denies Federal SSI benefits to inmates of State and local correctional facilities. Although prisoners were not entitled to these benefits under existing Federal law, there was no way to match prisoners in local institutions with benefit checks mailed by the Federal Government. The Criminal Welfare Prevention Act—signed into law as part of last year's welfare reform package—creates a voluntary bridge between local sheriffs and the Federal Government, helping sheriffs identify ineligible individuals. This commonsense reform will save taxpayers millions of dollars—without imposing unfunded mandates or establishing new government bureaucracies.

However, there is still more work to do. Originally, the Criminal Welfare Prevention Act had aimed to deny local prisoners Social Security [OASDI] benefits as well, but these provisions were dropped from the final conference report to comply with Senate rules against making changes to OASDI in a reconciliation bill. Consequently, many local prisoners are still receiving OASDI benefits for which they are currently ineligible under Federal law.

To address this problem, we are introducing the Criminal Welfare Prevention Act, Part II. This bill will create monetary incentives for State and local law enforcement authorities to enter into voluntary data-sharing contracts with the Social Security Administration. This exchange of information will help get prisoners off our benefit rolls and will save taxpayers an estimated \$35 million by the year 2002. Under our proposal, if a participating local authority reports to the SSA that an incarcerated convict has received an OASDI check within the previous 30 days, that local authority will receive a cash payment of \$400. If the discovery is made within 90 days, the local authority will receive \$200. Again, participation in these contracts is purely voluntary—our bill will create an incentive structure, not an unfunded Federal mandate.

In this time of severe budgetary constraints, we strongly believe that Congress needs to

cut off this tremendously wasteful flow of scarce resources. Last Congress, the original Criminal Welfare Prevention Act attracted nearly 200 cosponsors, and its SSI-related portions are now law. The remaining OASDI provisions passed the House late last year as part of a Social Security Technical Corrections bill, but Congress adjourned before Senate action could be taken. Now is the time to finish the job. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this much-needed bipartisan reform.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO PROTECT MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 1997

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, today Representative STARK and I are introducing legislation to correct what has become a significant problem for many Medicare beneficiaries. Under current law, when Medicare beneficiaries receive health care in a hospital outpatient department [HOPD], they are responsible for an average of 45 percent of the total payment to the hospital. Obviously, this is far more than the 20 percent copayment that was intended when the law was first enacted.

This problem arose because the Medicare law specifies that beneficiaries are responsible for 20 percent of what the hospital charges for services rendered in their outpatient departments, while Medicare only pays 80 percent of what it deems to be the reasonable cost for such services. Until the past few decades, costs and charges remained relatively the same. However, over the past few years, charges have risen much more rapidly than reasonable costs, causing a rapid rise in beneficiary coinsurance liability.

Our legislation will correct the problem by establishing a new payment system for HOPD's which will allow the beneficiary copayment to be fixed at 20 percent of a set amount and will also ensure that Medicare will be paying its fair share.

We recognize that reducing the HOPD beneficiary copayment liability will cause a loss in revenue for hospitals and will also cost the Medicare Program money as it begins to pay its fair share of HOPD services. We do not believe, however, that these are reasons to continue to force senior citizens to pay increasingly more than they should for HOPD services. We want to work with hospitals and with the Health Care Financing Administration to find a solution to this difficult and growing problem that faces millions of Medicare beneficiaries.

Our legislation will help to soften the blow to the Medicare Program by simultaneously correcting a problem in how Medicare pays for some HOPD services. Because of a flaw in the payment formula, called the "formula-driven overpayment," Medicare has been systematically overpaying hospitals for many services provided in HOPD's. While correcting the beneficiary coinsurance problem will cost Medicare money, correcting the formula-driven overpayment will help to mitigate the loss to the program.

I have introduced legislation in the past that would have corrected the beneficiary coinsur-

ance problem. I am hopeful that this Congress will recognize the importance of relieving Medicare beneficiaries of the unfair burden they are currently shouldering when they receive health care in hospital outpatient departments.

HONORING PAUL CLARKE

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 1997

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, the residents of California's 25th Congressional District recently recognized the passing of one of their dedicated and loyal citizens, Mr. Paul Clarke. Consultant, radio newsman, media expert, husband, son, father, and grandfather, Mr. Clarke embodied the voice and vision of the residents of the San Fernando Valley. Remembered in Washington as the chief of staff of Congresswoman Bobbi Fielder, whom he later married, southern Californians came to know him as a man with a firm grasp on the pulse of the valley.

Instrumental in Washington to furthering a variety of issues important to the San Fernando Valley, Mr. Clarke became known as a talented political campaign consultant with an innate understanding of his community. Honest and forthright, Paul Clarke was an invaluable source of information for reporters and the news industry throughout southern California.

We will miss Paul Clarke's sense of humor, wit, intelligence, and friendship. Our prayers go out to our former colleague, Bobbi Fielder, as well as to all of Mr. Clarke's family. May the Lord bless and keep him well. In our hearts and thoughts, he remains.

THE LEGACY OF THE LATE HONORABLE PAUL TSONGAS

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 1997

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, while the House was in recess in January, a former congressional colleague, retired Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas died after complications from cancer. I was a long-time admirer of Paul Tsongas, especially for the wisdom with which he approached life and the value he placed on his family.

For many in public service, it often comes down to choices between the job and family. Do I attend the social event or go home for my son's birthday party? Do I go to the reception sponsored by a special interest group or attend my daughter's soccer tournament? With Paul Tsongas, there was no choice. Family came first and foremost.

For several years I have used the way Paul Tsongas lived his life as an example in my speeches about family values. One of my favorite quotes from him is that he "never heard anyone on their deathbed say, 'I wish had spent more time with my business.'"

What are our personal priorities? People generally serve in the Congress because they want to help other people. But we need to remember that while we serve in Congress trying to help others, we do not forget those who matter most to us—our families.